

# Michigan Day Care Licensing



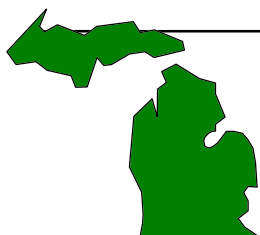
DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSUMER & INDUSTRY SERVICES  
Division of Child Day Care Licensing

## PROFESSIONALISM

Issue 48 Winter, 1999

Dear Reader,

This publication provides topical information regarding young children who are cared for in licensed child care settings. We encourage child care providers to make this publication available to the parents of the children in care or to provide them with the web address so they may receive their own copy. Issue 43 and beyond are available on the internet.



## From the Director

This issue emphasizes the importance of the professionalism of child care providers. Each provider can make individual and unique contributions in their particular child care organization. Care provided in a child's formative years can have a profound impact on that child's development throughout his lifetime.

Michigan's 22,000 dedicated child care providers impact the lives of some 350,000 children at any one time. To say that child care is not important in the lives of children and the future of our society would be a serious understatement. For that reason, we periodically highlight opportunities available to providers which can refresh, educate, and stimulate them to offer better care. I encourage you to take advantage of these professional development opportunities as they arise by:

- ◆ Joining various associations such as, Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MAEYC), state and local family day care associations.
- ◆ Attending conferences, workshops, and other training sessions sponsored by community coordinators of child care (4C) associations, (MAEYC), or other local and state organizations.
- ◆ Taking courses at local community colleges and universities.
- ◆ Reading newsletters and journals to enhance one's professional knowledge and information.
- ◆ Earning a Child Development Associate (CDA). CDA credentials are available for family and group day care home providers and child care center personnel.
- ◆ Exploring accreditation options available for centers and homes.

Your licensing consultant or local 4C office can help direct you to organizations in your area that have information regarding professional development for child care providers.

Many of you have taken advantage of the variety of opportunities available for professional development and enhancement. You are to be commended for your desire to learn, to improve what you do for children, and

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to share what you know with other providers.

Child care, regardless of where it may be provided, is much more than babysitting. Unfortunately, for many citizens of this state, that is how they see what you do. We can agree that it is much more than that. As you dedicate yourselves to providing children in your care with stimulating and rewarding experiences, the value of child care will increase and the myths of child care providers being baby-sitters or providing just custodial care can be eliminated. That will, in part be accomplished as you arm yourself with increased knowledge and understanding in meeting the needs of children in your care.

Ted deWolf, Director  
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## **What Does It Mean To Be A Professional?**

*Carole M. Grates, Consultant  
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What does it mean to be a professional? What sets a professional apart from others who do the same work?

### **First Impressions**

First impressions count in any business. And that starts with how you answer the telephone. All staff should be trained to answer with your business name. Keep the important information regarding your hours and fees next to the phone. No one should be put on hold for a long time. If the staff person cannot answer the question, she should take the person's name and phone number and promise a return call within a reasonable amount of time. And then...be sure to return the call!

Secondly, consider your answering message. It also should be professional. Save the cute little comments or children making noise in the background for other arenas. Remember each call is a potential paying customer.

Chaos is very evident over the phone lines. If possible, locate your phone in a place that is away from the daily busy noise of the program. What may be the good sounds of children playing can sound like a program out of control to a stranger.

The second "first impression" you make is when the parent comes to your door. A doctor's office feels professional as soon as you walk in. The waiting room is not cluttered. It is quiet. A receptionist greets you. You are acknowledged and your questions are answered.

Is this realistic in a childcare setting? To a degree, yes. You can arrange your home or center so that there is a small area to greet parents. Keep the area clear of toys and other equipment. Have some parent materials available such as books or magazines on parenting issues.

No parent should go unacknowledged when she comes into the setting. Again all staff should be trained to greet parents. The best thing is if you can be the one to greet them. This gives parents a sense of who is in control. It is very disconcerting to come into a program and have the staff act like they are not sure who is in charge.

### **Lasting Impressions**

A parent handbook is a testimony to your professionalism. It shows parents you are serious about your work and have thought through the policies that will govern how you operate. This should be readily available for prospective families. And staff should be familiar with it also.

Staff should also dress in a professional manner. This does not mean suits and high heels. However, there should be an expectation that staff will be neat and clean. Providing smocks or aprons that are uniform will enhance your staff's appearance. It gives a sense that there is a commitment and continuity among the caregivers. Another way of professionalizing your staff is to provide name tags. This will help parents to know the names of all the caregivers.

If you are a home child care provider, you should be up and dressed when the first parent arrives. It does not instill much confidence if you meet a parent at the door with rollers in your hair and your bathrobe on.



You would think twice before going into a doctor's office where the receptionist was still putting on her make-up when you arrived.

The most important lasting impression is the way you and the staff talk to and interact with the children. Voices should be kept soft. Staff should get down to the children's eye level.

When talking with parents, sound assertive and secure. Never let a parent push you over the edge in front of the children or other parents. Go with an angry parent to another area and settle your differences.

### **A Trained Staff is A Professional Staff**

Take the time to orient new staff to all procedures and policies. Review these at staff meetings on a regular basis so that all caregivers are well versed in what you expect. This is a basic requirement.

However, staff also need to be trained regularly on child development and programming. They should be able to explain what they are doing to parents who ask. Their lesson plans should reflect the best knowledge we have in preparing a children's program.

### **Personal Professionalism**

What does it take to be personally professional? A major indicator of a professional is membership in a professional organization or support group. This shows you see yourself as part of a larger field and want to improve the services you provide. It tells your families you are seeking to be the best you can be.

Secondly, a professional seeks continuing education. Attendance at conferences and workshops to learn new ideas and hone old skills is a hallmark of every professional.

Thirdly, professionals mentor other child care providers as they enter the field. Sharing your knowledge with new providers enhances the entire profession of childcare. ❖

### **Take the Professionalism Test**

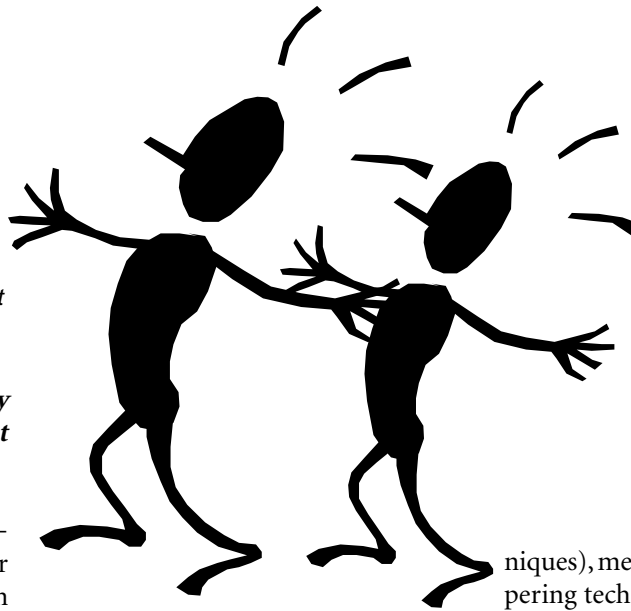
- Do I have a handbook for parents?
- Do I have my hours and fees next to the telephone?
- Have all staff been trained to answer the phone?
- Have all staff been trained to greet parents when they enter the building?
- Do I do an orientation for all new staff?
- Do I review program policies and procedures at regular staff meetings?
- Do my staff have opportunities for training in child development and programming?
- Do I have some dress code expectations?
- Have I provided my staff with smocks or aprons that identify them as staff members?
- Do all staff interact in a positive way with children and parents?
- Do all staff get on the eye level of the children when talking with them?
- Would my program seem professional to *me* if I were the new parent coming in the door?
- Am I a member of at least one professional organization or support group?
- Have I attended at least one workshop or conference during the last year?

**Hope you passed with flying colors!**

## Site Visit Anxiety: You're Better Prepared Than You Think!

*Diane Gillham, Licensing Consultant  
Traverse City*

*A knock at the door; a friendly  
"Hello"; "Oh no . . . Licensing! Not  
today!"*



A visit from your day care licensing consultant, whether scheduled or not, often strikes fear and anxiety in the hearts of many providers! This is an understandable reaction but it is an attitude that is worth reinterpreting. A visit from your child day care licensing consultant assures that you are meeting minimal standards established by the state and will assist you to operate a safer environment for the children who attend. The focus of the visit is to assure the protection of children in and out of home care through prevention.

Whether you operate a family or group day care in your home, or are responsible for the activities in a large day care center, child day care licensing is a part of your life. Site visits are required for new family homes and are scheduled within 90 days of registration. A scheduled visit is also made to group day care homes and child care centers prior to the issuance of the original license; unannounced visits are made at license renewal time, midway through a 2-year regular license (interim) and for many complaint investigations.

Whatever the reason for the licensing consultant's visit, don't panic. You are probably better prepared than you realize. The licensing consultant understands that you have a job to do that cannot be put on hold to work with licensing, so try to be at ease. During the visit, which will last from 1 hour to a full day, depending on the size of your facility, the licensing consultant will need to complete four primary tasks:

- Tour the building
- Observe the program, including staff interviews
- Review records for children and staff
- Share findings with the home provider or program director

The tour and exit interview will require your participation. Otherwise, after giving the licensing consultant access to necessary records, you may continue with "business as usual." Your licensing consultant is anxious to see you in action and requires only a chair and a spot to work, from which your program may also be viewed.

As the schedule permits, suggest an appropriate time to tour your home or center. For family and group day care homes, the licensing consultant must see the entire house, including those areas not used for day care, to assure that the structure and premises are safe. You will also be asked to show hazardous materials. In centers, all child care use areas, as well as the heating plant, must be viewed. For all types of facilities, the outside play area will be examined to assess its safety for children at play.

Program observation occurs throughout the licensing consultant's visit. Staff to child ratios are noted: interactions with children (including discipline tech-

niques), meal/snack procedures, diapering techniques equipment available and activities offered are all observed. Your licensing consultant will note those areas that are going well, in addition to any rule non-compliances that are evident.

Child information records are reviewed to determine if required information has been recorded. If parents have filled in all of the blanks you're probably doing great in this area! Documentation of child and staff physicals, and required immunizations are reviewed in centers. If you operate a day care home don't forget to keep a record of fire and tornado drills!

In most situations, depending on your licensing consultant's "style" and issues to be discussed, the exit interview may take from 20 minutes to an hour, and will be held the day of the visit. If you are lucky, this may coincide with rest time or after the majority of the children have left for the day. Perhaps an assistant can supervise the children during this period or it can be conducted as children engage in free play activities.

Whether your program was found to have no violations during this particular visit, or multiple rule non-compliances were cited, with corrections to be made, you've made it through another licensing visit! Stay in touch with your consultant throughout the year; call with questions; develop a partnership with licensing, and you'll always be ready for that knock on the door! ♦

## What Can You Offer Me?

Judy Levine, Area Manager  
Division of Child Care Licensing

*The licensing consultant is at the door for an onsite inspection. Maybe you were expecting a visit, maybe you weren't.*

*How do you respond? Does your heart flutter and begin to beat a little faster? Do your palms start sweating? Or, do you feel relaxed and genuinely pleased to see her?*

A lot of your reaction depends on how you view the licensing visit. If you regard the visit as an imposition, as something to endure, as a time to be criticized, then you will experience some negative reactions. If however, these visits are seen as an opportunity to receive objective feedback to improve or enhance services to the children and their families, then you will be pleased.

You may ask, **"What do the licensing consultants have to offer me?"** Let's look at their educational and professional experiences. Licensing consultants have either a Masters or Bachelors degree in Child Development, Early Childhood Education, Social Work, or Guidance and Counseling. Many of the licensing consultants have experience teaching children in a variety of child care settings. Several have directed child care centers. Others worked with children and families in social work situations.

The majority of the licensing consultants have been with this division for at least five years and many for well over ten years. The usual workload is comprised of family day care homes, group homes and child care centers.

As licensing consultants, they have received training in a wide variety of topics such as:

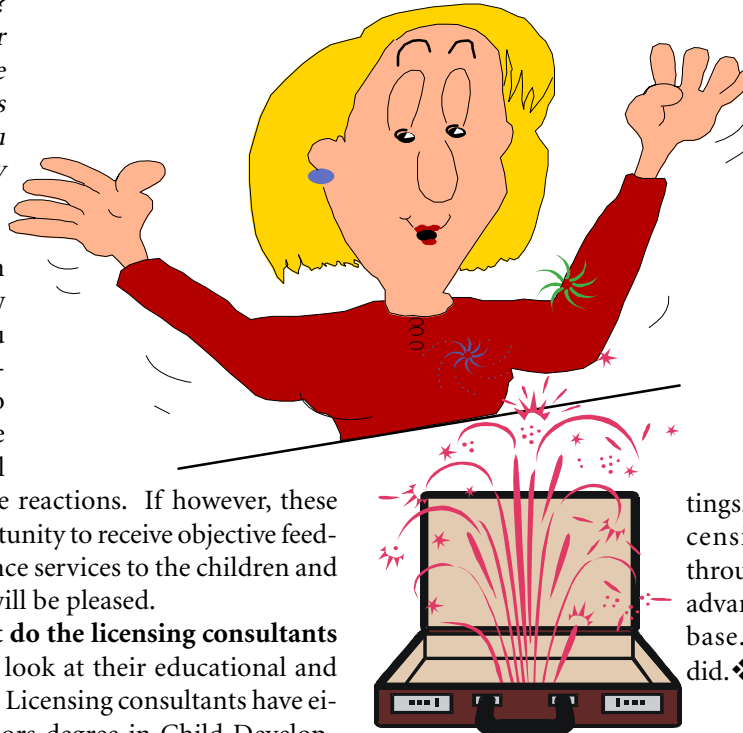
- ✓ Child development
- ✓ Programs and equipment for child care settings
- ✓ Discipline
- ✓ Working with special needs children
- ✓ Identifying and working with children who have been abused or neglected
- ✓ Controlling contagious diseases in child care settings
- ✓ Environmental health and fire safety issues

Now you may ask, **"How can licensing consultants help me?"** Their educational and professional experi-

ence along with their experience with the division, the additional training they have received and the diversity of programs with which they work, make them prime resources to answer questions you may have. In addition, they may be available for training you and your staff. The fact that they visit such a variety of child care facilities means they see many creative ways of handling

situations that they can share with you. Also, you can benefit from information they have obtained through hardships other providers have encountered, that can save you from experiencing similar unpleasant consequences.

Licensing consultants share in your desire to have children in quality child care settings. So the next time the licensing consultant comes through your front door, take advantage of her knowledge base. You will be glad you did. ♦



### The Starfish

*An old man walked the ocean beach the morning after a violent storm. He noticed a young man ahead of him, picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea.*

*Finally, unable to contain himself, the old man approached the youth and asked him why he was doing this. The young man replied that the stranded starfish would die if left on the beach in morning sun. "But the beach goes on for miles and there are thousands of starfish," countered the old man. "What you are doing won't make any difference!" The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and said "It makes a difference to this one."*

*Anonymous*



## A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON TRAINING

*Carole Grates, Consultant  
Primary Directions, Frankenmuth*

Recently staff trainers have been focusing on a new way of training that happens on-site and can be done by the director or peers. The current thought is that such training is more effective than workshops with no follow through.

Effective staff training has three major components (Johnston, "Assessing Staff Problems," Child Care Information Exchange):

- ✓ Clearly established goals
- ✓ Meaningful for the participants
- ✓ Actively valued by administrators

Orientation of new staff is critical to a quality program. It helps prevent rapid turnover and encourages consistent programming. Goal setting for orientation is best done by the director and the current staff. Develop a list of things to be covered and prioritize it to conform with center goals.

Set aside a specific time for orientation of the new staff so the process is not interrupted. Plan a time for preview of the overall plan as well as time for evaluation at the end. Evaluation time will help participants assess how the training was meaningful.

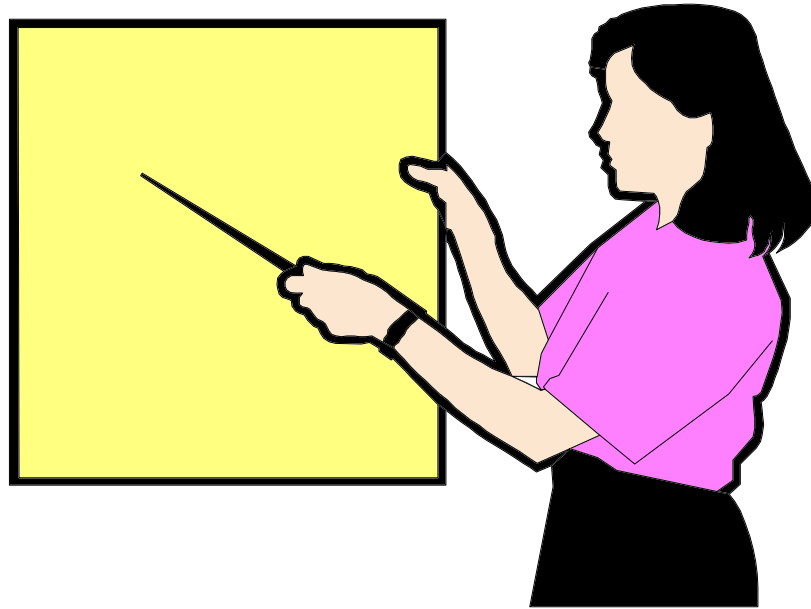
Orientations can be done by using a variety of techniques:

1. Provide a written outline of the orientation procedure. Schedule a tour of the facility, introduce her to staff, and plan time to discuss center goals and philosophy.
2. Invite current staff members to teach a specific area.
3. Provide opportunities for the trainee to observe as well as to participate. An effective method is to have her work closely with a skilled teacher.

Ongoing in-service training can be achieved through conferences and workshops. However, there are two other means of training that have more measurable effect.

1. Plan regular staff meetings with a problem-solving format. Encourage staff to identify problems and to work on them as a team. Staff and administrators do not always identify the same problems so be open to all views during these meetings. Such a format encourages peer support and communication.

2. Use a staff meeting to evaluate the program areas they would like to improve. As a group, prioritize these areas and establish three or four goals to be achieved.



You can plan an on-site workshop on the areas of concerns. This can be done by an outside presenter or by a staff member who has a special skill in the area. The workshop should include the "why" as well as the "what" of the issue and should allow for active involvement by the participants.

Follow through is important to any workshop. It can be achieved through a good handout for future reference and by evaluating any implementation of the ideas in staff meetings.

In-service training that allows the staff to set their own goals will assure a meaningful, lasting experience. Whether done on a shoestring or on a champagne budget, the key is meeting the needs of the trainees as they perceive them, not as others perceive them. ❖

## Michigan Child Care Futures Project Training: Family Independence Agency Investing in Quality Care

Mark Sullivan, Director  
*Michigan 4C Association*

The Family Independence Agency has renewed its commitment to quality child care by investing more than \$1,000,000 in child care provider training. The Michigan 4C Association was awarded the contract to train child care providers through the **Michigan Child Care Futures Project** which is a public/private partnership dedicated to improving the supply of quality child care in Michigan.

The Michigan Child Care Futures Project started in 1990 with a grant from the Ford Foundation. Support for the public/private partnership has also come from the Frey Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, the Mott Foundation, the Skillman Foundation as well as many Michigan businesses. In the beginning, provider train-

**T**raining has been linked to quality child care in a number of ways. First, and most importantly, training gives providers additional skills which they can use to enhance their programs for young children.

ing was offered in only a few of the 4C regions. Now, the training is available statewide and last year (1997), more than 4,000 child care providers completed either a Basic series, an Advanced series, a series on caring for children with special needs or a course for administrators.

All of the training available through the network of local/regional 4C offices conforms with the guidelines for attaining a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Some of the 4C offices have worked out arrangements with local community colleges so that providers can earn college credits for training. All of the 4C offices offer Continuing Education Units (CEU) from Michigan State University. Michigan Child Care Futures Project training series are integrated with other training opportunities in communities such as regional early

childhood conferences or satellite conferences jointly sponsored with the Department of Consumer and Industry Services/Division of Child Day Care Licensing and Michigan State University.

Training has been linked to quality child care in a number of ways. First, and most importantly, training gives providers additional skills which they can use to enhance their programs for young children. In the Michigan Child Care Futures Project evaluation, the evaluators found that providers gained important knowledge related to the care of children. In general, providers improved the way they work with young children by 1.6 points (on the 7 point Clifford-Harms Family Day Care Rating scale.)

Secondly, training provides a forum in which to exchange ideas with other providers. The 4C trainers provide a lot of important information but they also facilitate discussions among providers. Having an opportunity to share with/learn from another provider who has similar issues can be extremely helpful. The acquaintances made in a training series can be resources (and friends and supports) in the future. Trainers from the 4C network also often call upon resource persons from the community to add to the information available to the providers. In this way, child care providers can expand the list of experts they know when they need to call on an expert.

There is evidence to suggest that training is related to retention. In a survey of 4C offices, the Michigan 4C Association was able to determine that provider turnover is lower among the child care providers who have completed Futures training. (The Michigan 4C Association is seeking a sponsor for an evaluation of the correlation between training and retention.) Since consistent care is another factor in determining quality, there may be a relationship between retention (the length of time a person is a child care provider) and quality programs for kids.

Parents are becoming more aware of the advantage of training in terms of choosing a program for their children. The referral counselors at 4C offices assist parents in finding appropriate care which matches the needs of the parents. Referral counselors report that parents often ask about the qualifications of the providers. Since the inception of the Michigan Child Care Futures Project, 4C offices have been recording information about training on the child care database. Now, when a parent asks about the qualifications of a provider, the 4C offices can indicate which providers have training experience.

A new partnership is developing among the organizations and associations which are interested in training and professional development. The goal is to col-

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*Winter, 1999*

## Mentoring Home Day Care: One County's Experience

*Sandy Jones, Group Home Provider,  
Genesee County*

A group of experienced home day care providers in Genesee County, had the opportunity to talk with some ex-providers. They told us that one of their biggest problems when they started doing child care was a feeling of isolation. With no one to talk to when they had questions or problems, some of these providers quit within 6 months of getting licensed!

We started thinking that a mentor program would help meet the needs of new providers. After some discussion, we came up with the plan for the Genesee County Mentor Project. While there is some support from the Greater Flint/Thumb Area 4C and the Genesee County Child Day Care Licensing office, the program is the responsibility of the providers.

Mentors are providers who have been licensed for at least two years. They have been identified and recommended to the mentoring program by their peers and/or by their licensing consultant. Before being assigned to work with new providers, or apprentices, mentors must complete a training session, which includes information on what is expected of them and how adults learn.

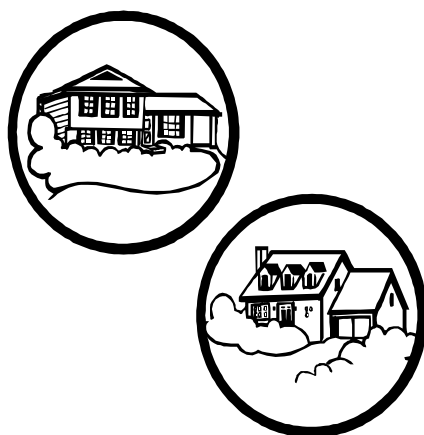
Apprentices indicate their interest in participating in the program by signing up during the orientation meeting. New providers are matched with an experienced home child care provider who lives nearby. It is expected that the mentors and apprentices make at least one visit to each other's home at least one time. The mentors are available to apprentices for a mini-

mum of two months. In that time they are available to answer questions, help find resources, and be a support as the apprentices get started.

Some of the areas mentors provide assistance in are:

- ◆ Working with parents
- ◆ Working with employees
- ◆ Health and safety ideas
- ◆ Helping the new provider's family adjust to day care
- ◆ Practical business ideas
- ◆ Understanding licensing issues
- ◆ What it means to be a professional

Since the program began, a large number of new providers have received useful knowledge and ex-



perience from mentors. I feel this has prevented a quick burn out of the new providers. As these new people gain confidence and faith in themselves, they may help someone else who is just getting started.

Mentors get a real nice feeling about watching others grow into professional caregivers because of the help provided to them. This also renews our own sense of excitement about why we decided to open up our own child care homes. There is a growing need for good quality child care and this program is one way of providing this. ❖

## Teachers Mentoring Teachers

*Nancy Carnahan Webb, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Education  
The University of Michigan-Flint*

One important task directors have is to support their teachers' development. A planned and long-term relationship with a mentor can provide the ongoing support many novice as well as seasoned teachers need.

Such a mentoring project has been developed to support teacher growth at the UAW-GM Child Development Center. This project involves twelve UAW-GM teachers. The project coordinators are the directors of the center and a University of Michigan-Flint professor of Early Childhood Education. The goal of the project is to establish a mentoring model that will support teacher growth and commitment. What participants have learned may help others who are considering similar projects.

The first step was to develop some selection criteria for both mentors and mentees; a term later changed to partners. The project coordinators decided on the following:

### Criteria for becoming a mentor:

- ✓ Employed by UAW-GM CDC for at least one year;
- ✓ Four year degree in Early Childhood Education, or
- ✓ Education/Child Development and two years experience working with young children or two year degree in Early Childhood, or
- ✓ Education/Child Development and at least five years of experience working with young children
- ✓ Ability to work effectively with adults;
- ✓ Commitment to participate in program at least one year.

Teachers who were interested in being mentors submitted a letter



noting relevant qualifications, their reasons for being interested, and one letter of recommendation from a colleague.

**Criteria for becoming a partner:**

- ✓ Interested in growing as a professional;
- ✓ Commitment to participate in the program at least one year.

Teachers interested in serving as partners submitted letters describing their expectations of a mentoring program, characteristics wanted in a mentor, and what they hoped to gain through participation in the program. The directors used this information to select six teacher mentors and six partners.

Participation was voluntary and based on the individual teacher's desire to make the time commitment.

Once the mentors and partners were selected, center directors made decisions regarding which individuals were most compatible to serve as mentor-partner teams. The decisions were based on age groups with which the teachers worked, strengths individuals brought to the team, and personality styles. Also, because the UAW-GM CDC is open 24 hours a day, it was important that teams worked the same shift.

Project coordinators then developed the following meeting schedule and discussion topics:

■ **Week 1**

- Why mentor?
- What makes a good mentor?
- Characteristics of adult learners

- Values

■ **Week 2**

- Code of Ethics
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices

■ **Week 3**

- Code of Ethics (revise initial statement)

- How to model reflectivity
- Assisting partners in identifying their strengths
- Analyzing personal performance and assisting others

■ **Week 4**

- Stumbling blocks for new teachers
- Effective communication
- Stress to be expected
- Personal and professional growth

Mentor sessions are three hours in length.

**Partner Schedule**

■ **Week 1**

- What is a mentor?
- What is a partner? Meet with mentors

■ **Week 2**

- Expectations
- Personal and professional goals
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- Share Code of Ethics with mentors

Partner sessions are two hours in length.

Next, the Code of Ethics was developed collaboratively and reflects the beliefs and values of the mentors, partners, and project coordinators. The code is important because it establishes a set of beliefs about the purpose of mentoring, describes conditions of a successful mentoring program, and identifies desired outcomes of the mentoring project.

From June 1997 until April 1998, mentors and partners plan to observe each other, discuss the teaching process, read and discuss professional articles, and attend workshops run by project coordinators. Each month there will be an opportunity for the teachers to identify issues they want to address in the future. Project coordinators will respond to teachers' needs by

locating material related to the topics the teachers identify, engage in professional dialogue, and encourage each teacher to reflect on what she has learned.

While many factors influence the effectiveness of any mentoring project, project coordinators continually address five major issues: money, time, ownership, trust, and respect. First, for this project to be successful, additional money is needed to pay substitutes. This allows teachers time away from their classrooms to observe each other and to discuss their observations.

Second, meaningful mentor-partner teams need to develop a positive working relationship. This requires time to observe each other teach and time to coach, encourage, and reflect about beliefs, practices, and strategies.

Third, it is imperative that the participants maintain ownership in the project. This project cannot assume a top-down model imposed by center administrators. Although project coordinators identified initial training issues, the teachers pace their personal growth and identify specific supports they want during the process.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the issues of trust and respect must be addressed. A mentoring project means that teachers are opening themselves up to criticism in a way most have never experienced. If the members of the team do not respect each other, development will not be optimal.

Everyone seems renewed. Directors have a new appreciation of their teachers' strengths; teacher teams trust and value each other; and everyone has experienced increased confidence. If directors want strong and committed teachers, they must assume the responsibility to help their staff develop professional skills. ❖

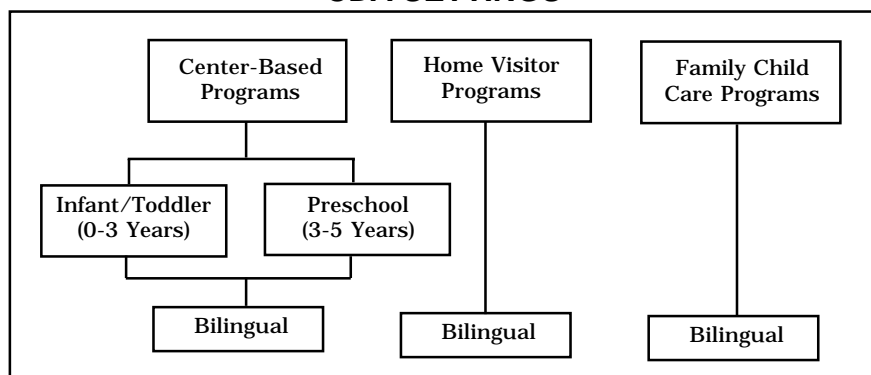
# Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About the CDA

Gwen Becker, Training Specialist  
4C Advocacy, Alma

A Child Development Associate is an individual who has successfully completed a CDA assessment and has been awarded the CDA Credential. She is able to meet the specific needs of children and works with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child development framework.

A CDA is an individual who has demonstrated competency in her ability to meet the CDA Competency Goals through her work in a center-based, home visitor or family child care program. In addition, an individual who has demonstrated competence in meeting bilingual CDA criteria is a CDA with a Bilingual Specialization.

## CDA SETTINGS



The CDA Competency Standards are the core of the CDA program. Composed of Goals and Functional Areas, they are statements of the skills needed to be a competent caregiver and the basis upon which caregivers are assessed.

While the Competency Goals establish the framework for caregiver behavior, the 13 Functional Areas describe the major tasks or functions caregivers must complete in order to carry out the competency Goals.

## Functional Areas for CDA

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Safe                 | 8. Self                |
| 2. Healthy              | 9. Social              |
| 3. Learning Environment | 10. Guidance           |
| 4. Physical             | 11. Families           |
| 5. Cognitive            | 12. Program Management |
| 6. Communication        | 13. Professionalism    |
| 7. Creative             |                        |

The Direct Assessment criteria includes:

1. You must be at least eighteen years old and have a high school diploma or a GED.
2. You may get Center-based Infant/Toddler (0-2 1/2) or a Preschool (2 1/2-5) Credential; a Family Child Care Credential (which includes Group Home); a Home Visitor Credential or a Bilingual Credential.
3. 480 contact hours with children in a formal setting within the past five years is required. This may be a work setting or a volunteer situation.
4. You must have completed 120 clock hours of formal child care education within the past five years. These 120 clock hours must be documented and may be acquired through college course work, 4C "Michigan Futures" Trainings, "On the Job" in-services, seminars (**not conferences**) and other sources which emphasize education in early childhood topics.

In addition to the documented 120 clock-hours of training, the candidate for the competency based CDA must:

1. Collect and organize 17 items related to the candidate's work with children for the Resource file. This also includes a short autobiographical statement and six short papers on the candidate's work with children.
2. Have at least one written observation done by an early childhood professional. The observation must be done while the candidate is acting as lead caregiver with a group of children.
3. Distribute and collect questionnaires to get feedback from parents about the candidate's work with their children.
4. Take a 60 question multiple choice exam administered by the CDA Representative at the time of the final assessment.
5. Have an oral interview to evaluate the candidate's knowledge and understanding of competent child care practices. The CDA Representative will review the Resource File.

The final assessment costs \$325. The Michigan 4C in Lansing administers a scholarship which is available to those who qualify.

The CDA credential must be renewed in 3 years and every 5 years thereafter. For CDA's who hold one credential and wish to obtain a second credential in a different setting, a Second Setting CDA is offered. The Sec-

*Continued on page 12*

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*Winter, 1999*

## Accreditation: Personal and Professional Development

*Ellen DeRosia, Office for Young Children,  
Ingham Regional 4C*

The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), originally chartered in 1982 as the National Association for Family Day Care, established a family child care accreditation system in 1988. Accreditation was designed to recognize providers who maintain a level of quality which exceeds the minimum standards required by state licensing regulations. As of October 1998 there were 951 accredited providers in 45 states. The number of providers in Michigan who maintain current accreditation has decreased from a peak of about forty-five in 1992 to sixteen in October 1998.

In the fall of 1995, NAFCC began working with The Family Child Care Accreditation Project at Wheelock College to create a new accreditation system. The Family Child Care Accreditation Project is designing a new system to effectively assess the special nature of family child care in light of the best practices identified by research. It is currently being piloted and is expected to go into effect nationally in 1999. While the new system is expected to improve the accreditation process, the reason why providers may want to consider becoming accredited are probably unchanged. In a series of interviews conducted prior to 1991, providers who had been accredited shared the reasons why they liked accreditation. These reasons remain valid motivators for any provider who is considering accreditation in 1999.

**Providers learn from the process, and are encouraged to learn more by pursuing ongoing training.** Though accreditation was designed to simply assess the quality of a family day care program, most providers learn from the process of completing the checklist. According to one provider, "It was a great experience. I feel I learned some things about myself as a person and a provider." Once they find out there are new and sometimes better ways to do things, most providers are highly motivated to attend workshops or enroll in formal classes.

**Providers feel more professional and their self-esteem is increased.** The experience of having a parent and a professional peer assess their program, while intimidating at first, results in providers realizing that they are professionals who meet nationally recognized standards of quality. Providers who have successfully completed accreditation feel good about themselves, their skills, and their business.

**Providers gain a more concrete definition of quality in family day care.** The assessment profile is a check-

list of specific items which indicate quality. Rather than general statements like "communicates with children" the profile lists such things as "talks with a child at the child's eye level". In addition to the specificity of the items on the checklist, the overall content encourages providers to seek a level of quality which exceeds the minimum standards guaranteed by state regulations.

**Providers gain renewed enthusiasm and excitement about their work, and become leaders in their field.** Providers who enter the accreditation process are challenged to examine their entire family day care program. In doing so they may rediscover the original reasons they chose to care for children, or discover that what began as a temporary "baby-sitting" job has become a serious career. This discovery process motivates many providers to take more active leadership roles at the local, state, or national level. Providers may demonstrate their leadership by joining a professional association, attending (or presenting) workshops or conferences, enrolling in formal classes, and/or advocating for children in the political arena.

**Providers are helped in marketing their programs to parents and some providers earn more money.** Accreditation is still relatively new and not well known by most parents who are consumers of child care. However, providers who have been accredited have several ways to help parents understand the importance of accreditation. Providers can display their certificate and let parents know about the accreditation process. These providers have gained the confidence to present themselves as professionals who provide high quality care to children. Accredited providers also have written policies and contracts which help them communicate clearly with parents. Though most providers say they have not raised their fees because of becoming accredited, providers still may end up earning more money. As providers become more confident about the quality of their programs, they tend to attract more families who want to enroll their children. Parents who value their child care provider and who have received clear communications about fees and payment policies are more apt to pay on time and in full.

**Providers who choose to become accredited generally find the process to be highly rewarding and beneficial.** For many providers accreditation is a big step forward in their professional career. As more providers become accredited and more parents become aware of the level of quality that accreditation indicates, the demand for accredited providers should increase. This demand may result in significant improvement in the overall status and quality of family day care. ❖



## NAEYC Center Accreditation

The National Association for the Education of Young Children administers an accreditation program for early childhood programs. The purpose of this system is to improve the quality of care and education in these programs. Accreditation has become an indicator of program quality. Many parents look for accredited programs when seeking child care.

“Accreditation has tremendous power to effect positive change. Accreditation of early childhood programs helps teachers and administrators evaluate and improve their practice and helps parents make informed decisions. But most of all, accreditation helps children.” (Accreditation Criteria and Procedures of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998 Edition.)

Look at all the benefits!

- ◆ Improves the quality of group programs available for young children and families
- ◆ Provides a valuable professional development experience for caregivers
- ◆ Assures funding sources of early childhood programs a sound investment
- ◆ Provides professional and public recognition for high quality early childhood programs
- ◆ Makes caregivers feel more professional
- ◆ Gives caregivers a more concrete definition of quality in child care programs
- ◆ Keeps caregivers excited about their work
- ◆ Encourages caregivers to pursue ongoing training
- ◆ Promotes higher quality than state regulations
- ◆ Helps accredited caregivers become leaders in the field
- ◆ Helps centers market their high quality programs to parents

## Interested in Becoming An Accredited Provider? *Scholarships Are Available*

### What kind of accreditation is available?

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredits child care centers by helping early childhood program personnel improve their programs. NAEYC evaluates the quality of these programs and certifies that they meet accreditation standards.

The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accredits family and group home child care providers whose services meet national standards of professional quality child care.

### You may be eligible for an accreditation scholarship.

The Michigan Community Coordinated Child Care (4C) Association provides scholarships for providers interested in becoming accredited. These scholarships cover the full cost of accreditation. The application fee is reimbursed on proof of payment. The validation fee is paid when the scholarship is awarded.

To be eligible for an accreditation scholarship, child care providers must have at least one child in their care who is subsidized by the Family Independence Agency. Family and group home providers must also be income eligible to receive the NAFCC scholarship.

The cost of accreditation for centers (NAEYC) varies based on the number of children enrolled in the program. The cost of accreditation for family and group homes (NAFCC) is about \$500.

For more information, call Shara at 800-950-4171 or 517-351-4171.

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## Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the CDA, Continued from page 10

ond Setting CDA may be earned for \$225 and only 45 clock hours of training specific to Second Setting.

You may ask, “Why should I get a CDA?” For many it is the personal satisfaction of achieving professional recognition for knowledge and skills in the field of child care. For others, their job requires them to have a CDA credential. If is even possible to become a director of a

center with a CDA credential and the completion of 12 semester hours in child development, child psychology, or early childhood education at an accredited college or university.

If I have stirred your interest, you may want to call the Council of Early Childhood Professional Recognition (CDA) in Washington, DC and ask for the CDA brochure. The telephone number is 800-424-4310. ❖



## Parents and Caregivers Working Together Through Communication

*Dee Kern, Group Child Care Provider/Consultant  
Charmwood Circle Child Day Care, St. Clair County*

Good communication between parents and a provider is vital to the success of a child care business. Parents can be the greatest advocates of your child care business and enhance your professional status in the community when they know what is happening at the facility and what is new in child development. As a child care professional it is imperative that you keep them informed.

I strive to keep parents informed on a daily basis by talking with them when they are picking up their child, sending notes home or leaving phone messages in the evening. I ask parents to keep me informed of special events in their families. Each day I make it a point to ask parents about their child's night and weekend activities. If a child is involved in outside activities, (such as tennis match, baseball game, dance recital) I ask the parent to keep us in-

formed of those dates so that other child care parents and/or staff may attend to support the child. Newsletters and calendars are published monthly. The newsletter, which may be up to four pages, includes: birthdays, up-coming events, recipes, articles of interest from conferences and workshops, welcoming new families, children's activities, projects and experiences, articles for sale, advance notice of field trips, special dates to remember, and parenting articles.

The interest in the newsletter is so high that by the end of each month, if a family has not received their newsletter, they request one.

The calendar is a day-by-day information schedule on particular events that will be taking place in the upcoming month such as: Green Day, Teddy Bear Picnic Day, Grandparents Day (held every Friday from 9:30-10:30), birthday parties, Bring A Fruit to Share Day, and more.

I realize that it does take a lot of time to put the newsletter and calendar together, but in the long run it is worth it. They reduce potential problems caused by miscom-

munication.

At the end of each year, a summary of business related expenses is published. Although some providers feel this information should be private, I feel that this is



a great opportunity to educate parents about what it costs to run a child care business. You do not have to divulge everything. Most parents do not own their own business and may not have a clue as to what it takes to run one. They just know the amount of money they pay each week.

I also feel that belonging to a professional organization such as the local Association For The Education of Young Children, and state and local professional boards in the community which are concerned with children's issues, is an asset. Whatever the organization may be, child care providers can continue to upgrade their skills and knowledge in the profession. Through enrollment in these organizations and attendance at training sessions you will enhance your child care skills and assist parents in developing improved parenting skills.

After 15 years in this profession, I am aware that time is limited in being able to communicate with parents. I also realize how valuable good communication is between all parties involved. ❖

*Dee Kern was nominated by parents for the Governor's Quality Achievement Award. She is a presenter of workshops on policies and contracts, and a consultant for parents on how to interview providers.*



## RATIO AND CAPACITY

Lori Hilborn, Group Home Provider  
Osceola County

*Six children per one child care provider. Twelve children total. Two children under eighteen months, four children under thirty months (including the eighteen months and under children) in any group of six children or less. Lets see, for two providers, that's four children under eighteen months for every twelve children, eight children total under thirty months, twelve children maximum regardless of age.*

What does this mean to me? As a group day care provider, this factors into my planning for each day, week, and month, as well as a quick answer for each inquiry regarding new enrollments.

While ratio and capacity rules really aren't that complicated, they always seem to be an issue. What happens when a parent who is normally scheduled for a set period of time decides to pick up her child an hour late, or drop the child off an hour early? Is it a big deal, one little hour? When the parent comes to your door at 7:00am instead of 8:00am, the school bus hasn't come to pick up one group of children yet, and you're left with fourteen children instead of twelve; yes, it is a big deal. Or if a parent doesn't pick up her six month old baby on time, and the next scheduled arrival is an eight month old, leaving you with five children under eighteen months for an hour overlap.....things do get frustrating.

One of the hardest things about day care is saying no. When parents need you, they *need* you and no is not well received. However, its even harder to enforce policies after a long period of being flexible and tolerating last-minute changes and inconveniences. While trying to earn a living, you agree to more and more, beyond what was first agreed upon, and soon slots begin to overlap and you really don't know where to set limits. Which parent do you approach first? Which child or children will soon be over eighteen months old? How do you cut back Jane when you just enrolled John?

There is no set answer, but one very important thing I have found is to explain ratio and capacity to each parent from the very beginning. Include information on this subject in your contract. Each parent receives a licensing rule book, but how many read it thoroughly? If the parent does not understand that you can only have six or twelve children at ANY GIVEN TIME, then naturally she will not understand why you ask her to be prompt in picking up or dropping off her child. Posting and highlighting this section of the rule book is a good idea. Explaining these rules from the beginning to each parent also tends to lessen schedule changes throughout the week. If a parent knows that her slot

may be filled by another child, she will tend to stick to a set schedule.

After explaining the rules, the next thing is to help parents understand that it is your license and your livelihood at stake if they can't comply with the rules or aren't willing to stay within a prearranged schedule. This obviously will directly affect them if you can no longer care for their child at ANY time. In my experience, most have been very helpful after realizing that they could cause a problem that would result in a loss of my license and no more day care for their child.

When the rules have been explained, the risks outlined and unscheduled changes alleviated, it is up to you to be consistent. The parents realize they can't put their child on the bus to be dropped off at your house without telling you, or show up an hour early in the morning without asking, so now what? They ask! They give advanced notice or warning, and ask if it will work out for you. Now it is up to you to say no, or yes if it doesn't interfere.

How do you say no? I find explaining again that there would be too many children at one time usually works without hard feelings. Next, explain that sticking to a schedule is necessary to accommodate each parent, as well as to better plan the day for the children. Last but not least, remind parents that you as a provider need to plan for a certain set amount of income each week, and a regular time schedule is the best way to ensure this.

While these methods work over the telephone, or on the way out the door, I find that posting information helps as an every day reminder. Posting also adds to the professionalism of your business; it helps parents see that you have regulations to follow and reasons for your decisions, and you aren't just available and open to every request. A posting of each child's drop-off and pick-up time, along with the bus schedules, allows parents to easily see why you can't accept certain changes, and reminds them of their own obligations. It also seems to help them value their time slot, and not want to jeopardize it. I have found this to be the case, when after many months of flexibility, I could no longer accept so many daily schedule changes. The requests for changes lessen with each repeated explanation of ratio and capacity. I have not lost any families and have gained a certain respect for the business aspect of child care.

Working together with the parents, explaining your perspective and relating it to their concerns is the best way to avoid many ratio and capacity problems, and to continue building good parent-provider relations.❖

## RESOURCES: PROFESSIONALISM

"Accreditation," National Association for Family Child Care, NAFCC, 206 6th Avenue, Suite 900, Des Moines, Iowa 50309-4016. Phone: (515) 282-8192. Fax (515) 282-9117. E-Mail: nafcc@assoc-mgmt.com, Internet: <http://www.nafcc.org>.

"Accreditation Criteria and Procedures of the National Association for the Education of Young Children," 1998 edition. National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, D.C., Telephone: 800-424-2460.

"Accreditation Works for States and Communities," The Family Child Care Accreditation Project. Kathy Modigliani, Ed. D., Director, Family Day Care Project at Wheelock College, 200 The Riverway, Boston, Mass. 02215-4176 Fax: (617) 738-0643.

"Childhood Programs: Does Accreditation Make a Difference?" In S. Bredekamp & B.A. Willer, (Eds.) NAEYC Accreditation: A Decade of Learning and the Years Ahead. NAEYC:Washington, D.C.

"The Early Childhood Career Lattice: Perspectives on Professional Development." Julianne Johnson & Janet McCracken, editors. c. 1994 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1509 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036-1426.

"The Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum - A Handbook for Mentors." Dan Bellm, Marcy Whitebook, Patty Hnativk. 1997 by the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force, 733 15th Street NW, Suite 1037, Washington, DC 20005-2112.

"Evaluation of NAFDC Accreditation Mentoring Project," Office for Young Children.

Harris, L., G. Morgan, and P. Sprague, 1996. "Facilitated accreditation project." In S. Bredekamp & B.A. Willer, (Eds.) NAEYC Accreditation: A Decade of Learning and the Years Ahead. NAEYC:Washington, D.C.

"Mentoring in Early Care and Education - Refining an Emerging Career Path." Marcy Whitebook, Patty Hnativk, Dan Bellm. November 1994 by the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force.

"Mentoring News." The National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force.

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, the accreditation department of NAEYC, 1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-1426, e-mail: [academy@naeyc.org](mailto:academy@naeyc.org).

"The Potential of Mentoring - An Assessment of the California Early Childhood Mentor Teacher Program." Marcy Whitebook and Laura Sakai. Spring 1995 by the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force.

"Teachers Mentoring Teachers." Nancy Carnahan Webb, PhD. Associate Professor of Education, University of Michigan - Flint.

"Ten Reasons Why Family Child Care Professionals Like Accreditation," Cohen, Nancy, Families and Work Institute.

Whitebrook, M. 1996. "NAEYC Accreditation as an Indicator of Program Quality: What Research Tells Us." In S. Bredekamp & B.A. Willer, (Eds.) NAEYC Accreditation: A Decade of Learning and the Years Ahead. NAEYC: Washington, D.C.

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### Michigan Futures, Continued from page 7

laborate to improve training opportunities. A secondary goal is to work towards a professional development system within child care.

Lastly, training now has a financial reward. Providers who care for FIA-subsidized children are eligible to apply for EQUIP (quality improvement) grants. Since there are more providers eligible and applying than there are grants, the Michigan 4C Association must score the proposals, rank them by score and give awards to the highest scored proposals. This year, FIA/Child Care Division has instructed the Michigan 4C Association to give additional points to providers who have a national

credential (CDA,), national accreditation (from NAEYC or NAFCC,) or have completed or are enrolled in Michigan Child Care Futures Project training. Paul Nelson, the Director of the Child Care Division, FIA wants to improve the quality of child care for low income children. It was his idea to start the EQUIP grant fund. Now, training can be recognized in the EQUIP grant process.

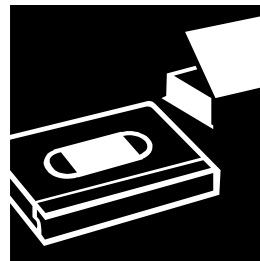
If you want to know more about the *Michigan Child Care Futures* series available in your area, contact your local 4C office. If you do not know the number of the local 4C office, please call the Michigan 4C Association office at 800-950-4171.❖

## Positive Billing Payment Procedure Video

The Family Independence Agency has been helping people with day care payments for more than twenty five years. Day care centers have billed for the services they provide for a long time. In February 1997, group homes started billing for day care services they provide. Eventually all those who provide day care to FIA-funded children will bill for the care they give.

A video has been created explaining the positive billing payment process.

You can borrow a copy from your licensing consultant or contact your local 4C agency for additional training.



Copies Printed:	26,000
Cost:	\$5,334.85 (.205 ea.)
Authority:	FIA Director

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